

"That Other Promise: Watch"

Scripture: Matthew 24:32-42

(Illustration of Milan Cathedral and three doors)

At the Cathedral in Milan there are three inscriptions over the respective doorways leading into the cathedral. Over the right-hand door is the inscription: "All that pleases is but for a moment." Over the left-hand door is the inscription; "All that troubles is but for a moment." But over the center door there is the simple sentence: "Nothing is important save that which is eternal."

That somewhat sums up the thinking of ~~xxx~~ much of the world. People are either concerned about having a good time and being entertained that many of them think of nothing else. Or else they are a part of the crowd that is only concerned about their particular problems to the exclusion of never giving a thought to others. And just how many are concerned with the things that are eternal. The President of Lancaster Bible College said just this past week something which makes a lot of sense. He was talking about being involved in church work and how we get caught up in the details of it all to the point of getting bent out of shape if our pet project is not carried out. The solution he said is to ask the question, "What difference will it make in the church a hundred years from now?" And you see the truth of that if you consider what some church people think is earthshattering. To get mad because a room is not painted green as we think it should be, or have yellow drapes. What difference will that make in a hundred years? But if we refuse to spend money to bring more people to the Lord, what difference would that make in a hundred years? You see, it is a matter of priorities. What is, or isn't important in the church?

I believe we can also see this in the matter of what church members and churches teach. There are churches where nothing but prophecy and future events are being taught. And the members of some of those churches are seeking to always go and hear yet another preacher giving his message on things to come. Then there are churches that will not under any circumstances look at the things yet to come such as the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. One extreme is as bad as the other, and there is always the danger of going overboard when considering these things. There is a certain balance we must seek to maintain, but it is imperative that we are aware that the Bible speaks of the return of Jesus Christ. There is a word which Jesus used that is recorded eleven different times in the Gospels. The word in Greek is "GREGOREUO" (GREG - GOR - YOO - O), and it means, "to keep awake, be vigilant, wake, be watchful," Literally it means, "WATCH."

In trying to determine what we should "Watch," we need to look briefly at some of the events which Jesus Himself said would take place which would indicate the nearness of His next appearance. This week we have jumped ahead a little in order to see some things that most Biblical scholars believe have happened. And then next week we will look at things that are happening and will continue to happen leading up to that Appearance of Jesus Christ for His Church.

In the 32nd verse Jesus was teaching His disciples by telling them, "Now learn a parable of the fig tree; when his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: so likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors," verses 32 & 33.

Almost all Biblical scholars concede that when a fig tree is mentioned in Scripture it has

to do with the nation of Israel. Jesus had told His disciples a number of things to come and He reminds them that they could interpret the season of the year by looking at a fig tree. It doesn't take a genius to know that after winter, when we see the buds beginning to grow on the trees that Spring is here and it won't be long until summer follows Spring and so on. So Jesus reminded the disciples that since they could deduce this, they were to look for signs that would point them to His return. Israel was no longer a nation as God intended it to be. The Jews were scattered to the far ends of the earth and those living in Palestine were a conquered people. They were held captive in their land by the hated Romans in the time of Jesus. Since anything said about the restoration of the nation of Israel could be construed by the Romans as treason, Jesus had to speak in hidden terms. But also, since Jesus said He didn't know when this future event would take place He had to tell it in such ~~xx~~ a way so if it occurred while the Jews were still under bondage they would know what was taking place, or if it took place in distant years, it could still be seen as God's fulfilled prophecy. The nation of Israel, (the fig tree), could not put forth leaves until it was once again a tree, (or a nation). It was in 1948 against great odds that the nation of Israel was born. Within a short period of time it became recognized as Israel by most of the world. With two short clashes with the Arabs Israel gained Jerusalem and the land which was given ~~them~~ to them by Almighty God. They thus became a world power when by all rights, the Arab world should have obliterated them.

Jesus told His disciples further, "Verily I say unto you, 'This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.'" verse 34.

Liberal scholars have taken this to mean the people who were living at the time, namely the disciples, and since they passed away and that prophecy wasn't fulfilled in their lifetimes, it will not be fulfilled. But the true interpretation is that the word "generation² can refer not only to a time period, but to a race or group of people. Jesus was saying that the Jews, their race would not pass away until all of this was fulfilled. Jewish history will not end until the Battle of Armageddon which is to take place at the end of the period of Tribulation.

Then Jesus said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away," vs 35. Two things will remain for ever. God's Word, and people. And then Jesus reiterates what He has said before and He tells what the conditions will be when all this takes place, (read verses 37-41). Noah was building the ark for 120 years. During that time there was no slackening of the people from their sin and worldliness. Our times greatly parallel those days. We are a pleasure seeking world with little or no regard for the things of God. At the time of the flood all of the people were destroyed, but at the Second Coming of the Lord some will be saved and others will be lost. Bible interpreters tell us that the references Jesus is ~~xx~~ making here of two people together, one saved, the other lost has to do with the judgement following the Battle of Armageddon. That is true, but I also believe it is a reference to what will take place at the Rapture when Jesus appears for His Church. Only those who are believers will be taken and those who are unbelievers will be left. That is why it is impera-

St. Paul's United Church of Christ
Butler, Pennsylvania

Rev. Ralph Link, Pastor June 10, 1990

Mr. Robert Weisenstein, Liturgist

Mr. Dale Rice, Minister of Music

Acolytes: Jennifer Gannon and Tom Vensel

ORDER OF WORSHIP 11:00 A.M.

Prelude

Chiming of the Hour

Announcements

Congregational Greeting

Joys

Prayer Requests

*Opening Hymn No. 306 "Lo! He Comes with Clouds Descending"

*Ascription

*Exhortation

*Confession (In Unison) We offer to thee, O Father, praise
for the gift of thy Spirit. We are made aware that your
love is given to us in many ways. When we are lonely,
when we are filled with doubt, when we show unbelief, it
is your Spirit that fills us with your truth. And when
we burn with hatred, or anger, or selfishness, or greed,
it is your Spirit which speaks to us with your love.
Forgive us, and may your Spirit live, guide, and direct
us in all ways. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Kyrie

*Assurance of Pardon

*Praise: Leader - Blessed be the Lord God

People - And blessed be His glorious name forever.

*Gloria Patri - page 142

Children's Moment

Hymn No. 486 "Open My Eyes That I May See"

Call to Prayer: Pastor - The Lord be with You

People - And with Thy Spirit

Pastor - Let us pray.

Morning Prayer

Giving of our Tithes and Offerings

Offertory

*Doxology - page 382

Hymn No. 497 "Like a River Glorious"

Scripture: Matthew 24: 32-42

Sermon: "That Other Promise: Watch"

*Invitational Hymn No. 495 "It Is Well with My Soul"

*Closing Chimes

*Benediction

*Postlude

***** *Congregation Standing *****

The beautiful flowers on the altar have been placed by

Mr. & Mrs. Dick Dally in memory of Loved Ones.

Mr. & Mrs. Dick Mangel will greet our members and guests

at the door this morning.

Ushering today are Jeanne Snyder, Judy Shearer and Helen

Crawford.

Nursery will be provided today Bonnie Gannon.

Van Driver for next Sunday will be Bill Snyder.

Attendance last Sunday was 115 with 7 visitors.

Lloyd Link and Ray Isherwood will be visiting the

hospital this week.

*Hospitalized: Walter Hollefreund and Mary Sherman in BMH.

Mid Diefenderfer in Allegheny General

Hulda Lippold in Indiana hospital

*TONIGHT!!! - at 7 P.M. we will be holding our pre-

registration for Vacation Bible School. This is the

opportunity to register early and to have an enjoyable

"sundae" on us. VBS will be held June 18 - 22 from

6:30 to 9:00. Hope to see you there and to make this a

good year for VBS. We need you to make it a success!!!

TUESDAY - 7:00 P.M. Finance Committee meeting

*Additional Hospitalizations:

Harry Davis in Mercy Hospital in Pittsburgh

Sally Cubbison in BMH

Slavic Gospel Association

Wheaton, IL. 60187

This is the address for the Russian Bible Collection that

that we took up last Sunday. Again today the baskets

will be at the doors if you would like to contribute.

*Work nite scheduled Wed June 13-6:30; need help Raindate???

JUNE 24 - PICNIC IN PARK & WORSHIP

At the close of the service the invitation is extended to

each worshipper to respond to God's leading for your

life. This invitation gives the opportunity to accept

Christ, to pray, to meditate, or to seek counseling.

The altar is open to everyone. The Pastor will assist

you if you desire.

(Ilus Cathedrl Milan & 3 dors)
 Rt hand dor=ALL THAT PLEASES IS BUT 4 A MOMENT
 Lft dor=ALL THAT TRUBLS IS BUT 4 A MOEMTN
 Centr dor=NUTHING IS IMPORTANT, SAV THAT WH/IS ETRNL
 (Ilus Pres Lanc Bib Coleg & wat dif maks 100 yrs)

Js recod as say word 11 tims in Gospls
 GOREUO - GREG - GOR - YOO - O =Means-KEEP AWAK, B VIGILNT,
 WAK, B WATCHFL, & LITRLY WATCH

Vss 32-33 - Fig tree

Vs 34=Genratin

Vs 35=G's Word, & people

Vss 37-41=Js reitrat

Vs 42=WATCH is TH/KEY WORD OF THAT OTHER PROMIS

(Ilus fathr tel 3yr-old wen cum home)

FIRST=need Zhav selvs prep
 & need 2prep othrs as wel

HOW IS IT W/U?

IS UR HOU IN ORDR?

CUN U HONESLY SAY HIS CUM IS B ANTICIPAT W/OUT RESERVATINS?

We hav optuntz 2mak evrth certin

READ V- 42

"That Other Promise: Watch"

Scripture: Matthew 24:32-42

(Ilus Cathedral in Milan & three dorways)

That sumwat sum up think of much of worl; peo R eithr concernd
 bout hav gud tim & B entraind, that many think of nuth els

Or els they R part of crowd only concernd bout ther partic probs

Exclusin of nevr giv thot 2othrs

Jus how many R concern w/thin s that R etrnl?

(Ilus Pres Lanc Bibl Coleg & quote=Wat dif wil mak in Ch 100yrs?)

2get mad caus rm no paint gr & draps yelo=Wat dif 100 yrs??

2neglec giv mony 20 peo brot 2 Xp=Wat dif 100 yrs mak??

U C, it is matt of priortys - Wat is, or isnt import in th/Ch?

I Bliev can also C this in matt wat ch/membrs Bliev & Ch/teach

ther R ch's wher nuth but proph/futur events taut & membrs go

wherevr this is subj & only thing they kno

then ther Ch's wil not pr/teach anyth bout Raptur/2nd Cum

One extrem is as bad as othr 4we canB caut up w/hed in clouds &

neglec minstry 2 othrs, or we ignor Word of God

ther cert balanc we need hav & impertiv we awar Bib spks of

return of Js Xp

Ther word Js usd wh/record 11 tims in Gospls

In Grk word is=GREGGOREUO=GREG-GOR, YOO-O & it means=keep awak,

B vigilnt, wak, B watchfl & litrlly WATCH

in try detrmn wat we shud WATCH, we need lk brifly at sum events

wh/Js Himself sed wud tak plac wh/wud indicat nearnes nex apear

this wk we jumpd ahed litl in ord "C sum thing mos Bib schlr

Bliev hav hapn

& then nex wk wil lk sum thing R hapn & wil continu 2hapn lead

up 2that apearnc of Js Xp 4 His Ch

Vss 32-33=READ

almos all Bib schlr concd wen fig tree mentin in Scrip it has

2nd w/natin of Is.

had tol discips numbr thing 2cum & He remin them they cud

interp seasn of yr by fig tree

it duznt tak genius 2kno aftr wint'r we C buds Bgin gro & spr

is here & no long til summr folo spr & so on

So Js tel discips sinc cud deduc this, they wer 2lk 4 signs

pt 2 His return

Is. was no lng'r natin as G intend it 2B-th/Jews wer sacr 2far

ends of erth & thoz liv in Palstin wer conqurd peo

they wer held captiv in ther land by hatd Rom in tim of Js

sinc anyth sed bout restratin of Is, as natin cudB contrud by

Romns as treasn, Js had spk hiddn terms

but also sinc Js didnt kno wen futur even wud tak plac, had 2

tel in such way so if it ocur whil Jews undr bondag, wud kno

wat was tak plac

or if tuk plac in distant yrs, cudB seen as fulfil G's proph

Th, natin of Is.=fig tree, cudnt put 4th lvs until once agin natin

in 1948 hatin of Is. was born & w/in short period of tim IS.

was recogniz by mos of world - all this agin grt odds

w/2 short clashs w/much superior numbrs of Arabs,Is, gaind 2/
 Jeru & th/land wh/givn 2them by G
 thus Bcam worl powr wen by rites shud hav bin obliterated by Arabs
 Vs 34=librl schlr's takn this 2mean th/peo who wer liv at tim,
 namly discip's, & sinc they passd away that proph no fulfil ther
 lifetimz thus wil not B fulfilled
 br' tru interp is word=GENRATIN can refr not only 2tim periud,
 b 2race or grp of peo
 Js was say,Jews,ther race wudnt pas away until all this fulfil
 Jewish histry wil not end until Batl Armagedon wh/2tak plac
 at end periud of Trib
 vs 35=2thing las 4evr-G's Word,& people
 Vss 37-41=Js reitrat wat sed B4 & tel wat conditins wilB wen all
 this taks plac
 Noah was bld ark 4-120 yrs & dur that tim ther no slak of sin
 & wordlines
 our times grtly parrel thoz days
 We R pleasur seek worl w/litl no regar 4things of G
 at tim of flud all peo of worl wer destrdyd,but at 2nd Cum of L
 sum wilB savd & othrs lost
 Bib intrps tel us ref Js maks 2peo 2gethr-lsavg,othr los has 2do
 w/judgmen folo Battl Armgedon
 this tru,bnt I also Bliev it ref 2wat wil tak plac at Rap wen Js
 appear 4His Ch
 only thoz who R Blievrs wilB takn & thoz who unBlievrs left
 that why impertiv we detrm our destny B4 we depart this lif
 eithr thru deth or th/Raptur
 th/warn is givn by Js at end this portin Scrip=READ Vs 42
 B prprd 4that day 2hapn at any tim=WATCH IS TH/KEY WORD4THAT OTHER
 PROMISE
 (Ilus fathr tel 3yr-old wen wud cum home)
 & this how shudB 4us we shudB lk w/anticpatin 2 th/Coming of The
 Lo 4us & His Ch
 but it not 2B tim of idlnes
 as we realiz th/shortnes of th/tim by th/signs we C,our watch-
 fulnes shudB a tim of reap 4th/kingdm so that othrs may hav
 wat is ours thru Xp
 FIRST=we need 2hav ourselvs prepd,& then we need 2prep othrs as
 well
 How is it w/U?
 Is Ur hous in ordr?
 Can U honesly say that His cuming is B anticpatd w/out reserv??
 We hav oprtunty 2day 2mak evrth certin
 th/warning needs 2ring in our ears=WATCH THERFORE:FOR YE KNOW
 NOT WAT HOUR UR LORD DOTH COME.

Shirley & Ralph Charles Link, Nancy Link, Dale with Lianne his wife, Lloyd Link with Karen his wife
 Jessica in front of Ralph C. Link
 Ethan and Alisha in front of R. Dale and Lianne Link (the eldest son & family)









Ralph C. Link
153 Keck Road
Sarver, Pa. 16055
(412) 352-1103

Born: April 9, 1929, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Married: December 15, 1951
Wife: Shirley Margaret Neill
Born: December 8, 1930, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Children: Ralph Dale Link, born May 11, 1955, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Lloyd Alan Link, born May 28, 1958, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Nancy Lynn Link, born March 15, 1961, Butler, Pa.

SCHOOLING:

Graduated from Perry High School, Pittsburgh, Pa.
June 1947

Lay Ministry School, Penn West Conference of United
Church of Christ, September 1965 to May 1969

Commissioned Lay Minister June 1969

Lancaster Theological Seminary, Lancaster, Pa.,
September 1970

Graduated from Lancaster Theological Seminary May 1974

Ordained to Christian Ministry March 10, 1974

PASTORATES:

As Lay Minister: short term, 1 month or less in
various churches 1965 to 1967

Emlenton Lamartine Charge of United Church of Christ
1967 to 1969

Short term in various churches 1970 until Seminary
entrance July 1970

July 1970 to December 1973 Student Pastor at Trinity
Charge, New Bloomfield, Duncannon, Pa., Penn Central
Conference, United Church of Christ

December 1973 to present, St. Paul's United Church of
Christ, Butler, Pa., Penn West Conference, United
Church of Christ

PERSONAL TESTIMONY

OF

Ralph C. Link

I am the youngest of five children. I was born just prior to the onset of the Depression. Our family was very poor. My father was an alcoholic and my mother was a very religious person who was searching for the Lord. During my childhood she did her best to teach me the things of the Lord. Later in life she came to a personal relationship with Him.

I grew up in the Evangelical and Reformed Church where salvation by grace alone was not preached nor taught. I knew all about Jesus, what He did, how He lived, His miracles, His death and resurrection, but I didn't know Him personally.

My life had many ups and downs and all the while I was attending church and striving with my good works to please God. At a very low point in my life when we were deeply in debt and my wife and three children were all ill, I came to the crossroads. I watched a Billy Graham Crusade on television from some distant city and the message he preached seemed to be directed right at me. I wrestled with making that commitment to Christ, but didn't. The next afternoon and evening at work on the 4 to 12 shift I came to the conclusion that I needed to make that commitment to Christ. It seemed like there was no other choice if life was to have any meaning. That night when I came home from work at 1:00 A.M., I laid face down on the living room floor and told God that I couldn't live my life in my own strength and I accepted the gift of salvation from my Savior Jesus Christ. My life has never been the same.

Through several meaningful circumstances I was called by God to serve Him in the Christian Ministry and to help spread that wonderful message of salvation through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. What a wonderful and rewarding time it has been and I give Him all the praise for my salvation and the opportunity to serve Him.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

OF

Ralph C. Link

I believe the Bible, both the Old and New Testaments to be the inspired inerrant Word of God. I believe the Bible is the complete revelation of His will for the salvation of men and it is the final authority for the Christian faith and life.

I believe in one God, who is eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

I believe in the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ that He is true God and true man. I believe that He was born of the Virgin Mary, that He lived in sinless life, that He performed the miracles recorded in Scripture, that He died on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins, that He bodily arose from the dead, that He ascended on high where He is at the right hand of Almighty God as our intercessor.

I believe in the Holy Spirit and that He comes and indwells each believer at the time of conversion. I believe that He lives in each believer to lead, to instruct, and to convict so that a believer may live a more godly life.

I believe that through the shed blood of Jesus Christ and through His resurrection, this is the only ground for justification and salvation for all who receive Him. A Lord and Savior and to such as receive Him, they are born of the Holy Spirit and become children of God.

I believe water baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of the Church but are not means of salvation.

I believe in the personal and premillennial and imminent coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I believe in the resurrection of the dead, for the believer to resurrection of life and joy with the Lord, for the unbeliever to resurrection of judgement and everlasting punishment.